

Chrystelle Baran

The owners of antique boutique Baran de Bordeaux, Chrystelle Baran and Nick Ferneyhough's carefully curated home is a tribute to their love of collectable pieces, many with romantic notions of their own.

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One of the most prized possessions in Chrystelle Baran and Nick Ferneyhough's home is a French trumeau oil painting in heavenly golds and Aegean blues, depicting the love story of Zeus and Europa. The resplendent 19th-century mirror decoration portrays the moment the Greek god transforms into a bull to carry the princess of Tyre away from the shore where she was picking flowers. According to the myth, the area they travelled together was named Europe in honour of their story.

As purveyors of luxury antiques and furnishings from Europa's domain, Chrystelle and Nick have turned sourcing homeware for their Baran de Bordeaux boutique into an art

form of its own. With the pair journeying to the continent for four months of the year, often staying at Chrystelle's family home in Gironde, Bordeaux, they are used to being immersed in beautiful surroundings – from villages with stone walls smoothed by years of appreciative hands running across them, to fortified castles where time stands still between hand-carved walls with tactual gilded details, whole ornate worlds unto themselves.

“Going back on my trips, I'm always learning about something new or visiting some beautiful chateau,” says Chrystelle, sitting on a Louis XVI armchair next to Nick in their spacious family room. “I just really wanted to bring a bit of my culture here.”

Wearing a Prada look from spring/summer 2019, Chrystelle Baran sits on a Louis XV painted armchair. Behind, a 19th-century cast-iron ram's head and Italian torchère rest on an 18th-century, painted Louis XV commode. Above is a 17th-century portrait of Philippe, Duke of Orléans, the brother of King Louis XIV. The rug is 18th-century Persian.



Chrystelle and Nick relax in the formal lounge. On the mid-century slate coffee table are a 1930 Louis Vuitton flower trunk and an 18th-century pickle jar and stone ball. The steel convex mirror was designed by Parisian Line Vautrin in the 1960s, and the pair of painted armchairs are Louis XVI. On the right, 18th-century walnut-oil jars from the Dordogne decorate a side table, and an Italian rococo candlestand casts a soft glow on a contemporary oil painting by Mexican artist Ulises Toache. Chrystelle wears shirt, POA, by Prada. Pant, \$399, by Camilla & Marc. Pendant, \$129, by Homage Online.



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THIS PAGE In the family room, a French trumeau oil painting (circa 1800) of Europa and Zeus hangs above a Louis XV painted commode sauteuse. On the commode sits a 19th-century glass absinthe jug and two 18th-century, gilded Italian torchères. A Louis XVI painted armchair (part of a pair) is matched with hand-painted de Gournay linen cushions. OPPOSITE PAGE Chrystelle reclines on a 19th-century English Chesterfield sofa in front of a 17th-century French Aubusson tapestry in the formal lounge. She wears Retrofete dress, \$995, from Muse. Heels, POA, by Miu Miu. Sequin bodice and jewellery, her own.

True to their travels, the couple’s Auckland property is decorated with a refined collection of antiques, mostly French, with custom de Gournay wallpaper providing a backdrop for these daydream believers. But just following the path through their classically clipped garden to the arched entrance – passing a golden, 20th-century Danish armillary sphere sundial along the way – is enough for any visitor to know they’ve arrived somewhere special, before even crossing the threshold.

The Remuera home was built in the 1930s but designed in a pure Georgian style by master architect Horace Massey. It’s an exercise in balanced creativity and restraint throughout, with black jarrah weatherboards giving the home a relaxed and romantic appearance, brought into line by more formal, white, small-paned Georgian windows. A terraced back garden of heady bay laurel and jasmine is contained by way of clipped camellias and buxus.

Without a hint of art deco reference in sight, the home sets its own design rules – Italian rococo candlestands look right at home beneath a contemporary oil painting by Mexican artist Ulises Toache. “It’s not all about wall-to-wall antiques,” says Chrystelle. “It’s about having pieces that are completely one-off,” adds Nick.

The formal lounge not only has candelabras and contemporary paintings but a mid-century slate coffee table,

Louis XVI armchairs, an English Chesterfield sofa and a 17th-century portrait of Philippe, the Duke of Orléans. The interiors are in good company – Philippe was the younger brother of Versailles’ Sun King, Louis XIV, with excellent taste and a progeny of royalty that led him to be called the “grandfather of Europe”.

Acting also as a music room, the lounge is a place to unwind at night – especially in winter when a roaring fire is reflected in a convex mirror designed by Line Vautrin, a French modernist artist dubbed “the poetess of metal” by American *Vogue* in the 1940s. An upright piano next to the entry and two vintage Gibson electric guitars, from the 1950s, are placed so Nick can’t walk past them without playing a tune, whether it’s a private concert for Chrystelle or to entertain guests during drinks. (The original maid’s quarters upstairs have been converted into a recording studio for Nick, who is a professional composer.) “We just love sharing our house with our friends and they love coming here,” says Chrystelle. “Every room is really, really used.”

Like all the zones in the home, the formal lounge’s antiques and vintage finds are styled together for a contemporary look – easeful yet elegant. It’s important to these interiors experts that their Baran de Bordeaux pieces don’t become artefacts but feel inviting and approachable for everyday living.





THIS PAGE Standing in front of the intimate dining room's de Gournay Earham wallpaper, hand-painted in a custom colourway on tea paper, Chrystelle wears a Zimmermann dress, \$999, from Superette. Jewellery, her own. OPPOSITE PAGE A vintage French vase and a pair of Louis XV gilded candelabras sit on a 19th-century French cherrywood farm table surrounded by Louis XV painted chairs. Behind is an 18th-century Venetian secrétaire; the colours in its original paint finish were the inspiration for the wallpaper, which is exclusive to Baran de Bordeaux.



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The high-ceilinged dining room is an intimate space in the innermost sanctum of the home. Here a silvered Louis XV chandelier appears to float above a French cherrywood table with Louis XV chairs tucked underneath. Painted antiques like these seats are Chrystelle and Nick’s speciality, having brought similar pieces to New Zealand when they first opened their antique and collectables store 18 years ago. Delicately faded, these items are feminine but not fussy – the perfect halfway point for their clients, with many pieces sent to beach homes (including the couple’s own Coromandel barn, which is styled at the intersection between Provence and the Hamptons).

While the doorways in this heritage home have been widened to allow for easy, modern living – it’s possible to sit on the white linen settee in the living area and look through the dining room, entranceway and lounge to the private garden and its stone Poseidon statue – the couple were careful to keep a sense of sanctuary from room to room. “You could just pull out all the walls and make it completely open plan but you’d lose something,” says Nick. “We’ve tried to make every room feel really different. Each room is an event.”

As the exclusive representatives for the brand in New Zealand, the pair have carefully selected custom de Gournay wallpaper throughout the home, using tranquil tones that enhance a sense of serene symmetry.

In the dining room, the botanical Earlham design from the Chinoiserie collection has been hand-painted on tea paper in a custom shade based on the original paint colour of an 18th-century Venetian secrétaire in the room. The powder room features the Panoramic Le Brésil design, in a monochromatic grey, which wraps around the sides so it’s jungle scene can be seen from the entry hallway.

Upstairs, the Plum Blossom design from the Japanese and Korean collection has been chosen for the newly redecorated master bedroom. It’s customised in a neutral colourway to complement the muted palette of taupe and grey-blue which encompasses the painted Louis XVI bedside tables and bedhead.

THIS PAGE A 19th-century French stone finial sits on a Louis XV buffet still with original distressed paint. Above hangs a late-19th-century painting of the Loire river. BELOW An 18th century Italian torchère stands alongside a gilded Louis XIV armchair recovered in silk damask. The rug is a 19th-century Tabriz. OPPOSITE PAGE Between the hallway and dining room Chrystelle wears Theory skirt pant, \$945, and Victoria Victoria Beckham Shirt, \$525, from Muse. Louis Vuitton heels, her own.





THIS PAGE A Louis XVI painted armchair sits next to a 1910 Louis Vuitton hat trunk. Behind is a 17th-century Aubusson tapestry. OPPOSITE PAGE The entranceway is home to a painted commode from the French Directoire period and a silvered Louis Philippe mirror. The lamp is a repurposed, 17th-century stone architectural element. Behind is a Swedish Mora clock, circa 1800. The chandelier is a silvered Louis XV piece. The powder room's de Gournay Le Brésil monochrome wallpaper can be seen through the doorway.



The French oak parquet floors in this room were picked out to complement a bare oak chest of drawers from the 18th-century Régence, and even a showpiece silver Louis XV chandelier made by Maison Baguès politely sits above the scene without making its presence too known. “It’s all about everything looking right and being beautiful around me,” says Chrystelle.

A conservatory at the far end of the room has been removed, in favour of a continuous interior. In this space a 17th-century French sofa is paired with a 1920s Louis Vuitton trunk. Found throughout the home, these chests are another forte of the Baran de Bordeaux store, accumulated in a range of original textiles – monogram, chequerboard, Trianon grey and more – and dating from the 1870s through to the 1930s, the golden age of collectable Vuitton trunks.

THIS PAGE A custom de Gournay wallpaper, Plum Blossom, was chosen for the serene master bedroom. The bedhead and bedsidetables are Louis XVI painted pieces. The lamps are repurposed, 17th-century, wrought-iron architectural elements, and the Louis XV chandelier is by renowned Paris maker Baguès. The oak parquet flooring has been carefully matched to the colour of the 18th-century Régence commode in bare oak. The ensuite’s vanity is a converted Louis XVI painted buffet. The silvered mirror is a 19th-century Louis Philippe piece, flanked by mid-century French sconces. The candle is from the Arty Fragrance range, exclusive to Baran de Bordeaux. OPPOSITE PAGE In the far corner of the bedroom, a 17th-century Louis XIII sofa sits facing a 1920 Louis Vuitton trunk.





Chrystelle and Nick maintain most of the garden themselves, which is a mix of boxwood hedging, bay laurel and jasmine. Clipped mature camellias add architectural drama while areas of mondo grass bring a softening touch. Chrystelle wears coat, \$839, by Camilla & Marc. Custom Trelise Cooper body suit, POA. Boots, \$410, by Merchant 1948. OPPOSITE PAGE The stone garden table and antique wrought-iron chairs were sourced in Provence.





LEFT Chrystelle wears Rebecca Taylor dress, \$1095, from Muse. Jimmy Choo shoes, her own. Vintage French zinc watering can. BELOW An Italian stone statue of Poseidon stands over the rear garden. At the front, a 20th-century Danish armillary sphere sundial greets guests along the front garden path.



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Chrystelle and Nick, who met while on overseas experiences in London, both have a love of collecting that has been passed on by their respective parents. Chrystelle grew up with 18th-century French pieces found in her Bordeaux home town, while Nick, an Auckland, learned an appreciation for 19th-century New Zealand designs. The European styles now reign supreme in their home, usurping all else with their emotive touch. “Italians and French people are so romantic and it really shows in their interiors,” says Chrystelle. “They like showing their emotions and that reflects in their antiques.”

The look of French antiques, in particular, was directly influenced by the style of the king on the throne at the time – Louis XV's curved furniture with its lightness of form, for example, gives way to the neo-classical straight lines of the decorative Louis XVI era. As she looks to the mythical trumeau oil painting on the wall above, Chrystelle imparts one last, very French piece of advice from her instinctive interior-design philosophy: “It's about being comfortable with your own taste and believing in what you're doing.”



1. 19th century French neoclassical Baccarat crystal chandelier, \$12,000. **2.** 19th century carved and upholstered model horse, \$6,800. **3.** Mid-century giltwood sunburst mirror, \$2,200. **4.** ‘Lux’ scented candle, \$95. **5.** 19th century Swedish ‘Mora’ painted clock, \$6,800. **6.** Early 20th century French globe, \$1,800. **7.** Pair of French Directoire painted bedsides, \$4,800. **8.** 1900 Louis Vuitton steamer trunk, POA. **9.** 18th century Louis XV walnut commode, \$16,000. **10.** Pair of Louis XV gilded brass candelabra, \$3,500. **11.** Louis Philippe period silvered mirror, \$3,500. **All from Baran de Bordeaux. www.frenchantiques.co.nz**